

Caucus will work in collaboration with Lupus Foundation of America to Advance Lupus Awareness

Washington, D.C. – Today, U.S. Representatives Tom Rooney (R-FL), William Keating (D-MA), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), and Jim Moran (D-VA) announced the formation of a Congressional Lupus Caucus. The Caucus will work in collaboration with the Lupus Foundation of America, the leading voluntary health organization for people with lupus, to ensure that all Members of Congress are armed with the understanding of the impact of lupus on individuals and their families, and actively support the advancement of lupus research and increased awareness of lupus among the public and health professionals.

Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease that affects an estimated 1.5 million Americans. Approximately, 90 percent of those with lupus are women, but men and children can also develop lupus. Lupus strikes without warning, has unpredictable, sometimes fatal effects, and has no known cause and no known cure. Lupus is also difficult to diagnose, and on average it takes an individual four years and three doctors to get an accurate diagnosis.

“The Lupus Foundation of America works tirelessly each day to improve the quality of life for all people affected by lupus. A Congressional Caucus is central to our advocacy efforts to raise awareness of lupus and bring lupus to the forefront of the nation’s health care agenda,” said Sandra C. Raymond, President and CEO, Lupus Foundation of America. “On behalf of people with lupus, we are so thankful to our Congressional champions for recognizing this need and working together with us to spearhead the Caucus that will help ensure all Members of Congress and their staffs are educated about the needs of people with lupus.”

“I hope that by forming the Congressional Lupus Caucus, we can improve education in Congress about this devastating disease, for which we have no known cause or cure. By supporting lupus research and increasing awareness, we can work to improve the quality of life for people with lupus and their families,” said Rep. Tom Rooney (R-FL).

“As a cofounder of the Congressional Lupus Caucus, I am incredibly excited to work with my bipartisan colleagues to increase awareness and understanding of this often debilitating disease,” said Rep. William Keating (D-MA). “A number of residents in my district feel the impact of lupus each day; yet, one of the biggest challenges facing us is that we do not have

hard statistics on the number of people in Massachusetts that are actually affected by this disease. I am hopeful that the work done by this Caucus will bring much needed answers to residents in our local communities struggling with lupus, provide them with insight as to the research the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is currently conducting, and give them greater hope for their future.”

“I am proud to be part of the Congressional Lupus Caucus. Lupus is a disease that is not only difficult to diagnose, but also unpredictable in its effects on the body. Sadly, more than 90 percent of those affected with Lupus are women,” said Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL). “Lupus primarily affects young women in their child bearing years and can interfere with a woman’s ability to work, have or raise family, or in some case even care for herself. These young women often feel invisible, alone, and too often their voices go unheard. I look forward to working with my Congressional colleagues and the Lupus Foundation of America as we work to better understand this debilitating disease and give a voice and hope to its sufferers and their loved ones.”

“It is an honor to serve as co-chair of the Congressional Lupus Caucus. There is little awareness of lupus and its impact on an estimated 1.5 million Americans,” said Rep. Jim Moran (D-VA) “This disease, disproportionately affecting women, needs greater attention. Our goal will be to increase understanding of this chronic disease and examine ways to support researchers’ efforts to identify, treat and to hopefully one day find a cure.”

The Caucus is currently recruiting members. Representatives Tom Rooney, William Keating, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, and Jim Moran will serve as co-chairs. [Click here](#) to read more about the Caucus.

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